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**To:** House Agricultural Committee  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 26, 2005  
**By:** Ben Kudwa, Legislative Director, Potato Growers of MI, Inc.  
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**Testimony:** Regarding Amendments to the Michigan Potato Industry Commission Act  
(PA 29, 1970)

### **Background**

The Michigan Potato Industry Commission was created by the state legislature (PA 29 of 1970). The statute provides for 10 grower members, 2 processors, 2 shippers and one retailer to be appointed as commission members. Eight grower members are selected from 7 districts by growers within the districts. Two growers serve at large and are nominated by the 8 district growers. The MPIC nominates processor, shipper and retailer representatives. All nominees are submitted to the Governor for appointment to the MPIC.

In 1970 there were approximately 700 commercial potato growers of 5 acres or larger. By 1986 the number dwindled to 500. MPIC official records on 4-25-05 listed 101 growers. Consolidation and concentration of production along with production area shifts have changed the composition of the industry. However the industry acreage and farm gate value continue to place potato production as the number one vegetable crop grown in the state.

The legislature recognized the impact of consolidation and concentration on commodity groups organized under Michigan Public Act 232 (Carrot, Cherry, Corn, Apple, Asparagus, Plum, Onion, Dairy, Soybean, Deer & Elk, Cranberry) and amended PA 232 to allow reapportionment and downsizing by action of the Director of the Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Commission on Agriculture.

### **Legislative request**

The MPIC recognizes the value of providing a mechanism to down size and reapportion as the industry changes. The legislature recognized this also and provided an appropriate amendment for commodity groups organized under PA 232. It is the Michigan Potato Industry Commission's request that PA 29 of 1970 be amended by the use of similar language that was incorporated into PA 232. The amendment in Michigan Public Act 232 only changed the number and location of representatives; no change is made to the appointment process.